A SERMON

PREACHED at the

CONSECRATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD

Jenison

THOMAS

Lord Biſhop of *LINCOLN.*

In *Lambeth* Chappel, *Jan.* 10. 169½.

BY

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Coloſſ. ij. 5. latter part.

Joying and beholding your Order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your Faith in Chriſt.

THIS Epiſtle was written by St. *Paul*, a Priſoner at *Rome*, and ſent, as is ſuppoſed, at the ſame time with the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, (for they contain much the ſame Matter, and were ſent by the ſame Perſon.) It was ſent to the *Coloſſians*, a Church which himſelf had not planted; and therefore he challengeth no other power over them, than an Apoſtle at large would do.

And in this Epiſtle, being an Apoſtle, though a ſtranger to them, he inſiſts eſpecially on theſe Three Things:

I. He rejoyceth to hear of the happy and flouriſhing eſtate in which the Church among them was.

II. He warns them of ſome bad Opinions creeping in among them, and ſo of the Danger in which they were.

III. He gives them Apoſtolical Advice and Inſtruction.

And from the occaſion and general ſcope of this Epiſtle we learn ſeveral things worthy our Notice.

Firſt, We have an inſtance of an excellent Chriſtian Spirit, when he, though abſent, hath ſuch a care of, and was ſo concerned in the good eſtate of the Church at *Coloſſe*; exactly according to his own Command elſewhere, He rejoyced as a Member of the ſame Body with them: Which alſo ſhows us the Temper that we ſhould be of, to Pray, Rejoyce and give Thanks, for a Publick Good, eſpecially that redounds to the Church, as for the beſt thing that can befal our ſelves; and even to be content, that our Private Intereſt ſhould give place to a more General and Publick One: As St. *Paul* here, though

though a Priſoner at *Rome*, yet regards not his own Chain, when he reflects on the *Order* and *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith* in the Chriſtians at *Coloſſe*. He over-looks and forgets his own Afflictions, when he had ſo happy an occaſion of rejoycing at their Good.

Secondly, We have alſo in this Apoſtle an inſtance of an excellent Biſhop, who when he could not be with them, in Perſon himſelf, ſends to inſtruct and viſit a Church ſo far diſtant, rejoyceth at the Good that he obſerves among them, and warns them of the Evil impendent on them: For the Biſhops ſucceded the Apoſtles in their Places and Charges, only they have their Power and Care confined eſpecially to one certain Diſtrict and Dioceſe; whereas that of the Apoſtles was more general and unlimitted over the World.

Thirdly, We learn alſo, that a proſpect of Danger that we may be in, ſhould not ſo daunt us, as to hinder us from rejoycing at our preſent Good Eſtate, and from giving God Thanks for it: As here the Apoſtle rejoyced at the happy ſtate of Affairs which he obſerved among them; though at the ſame time he was ſenſible of the Danger they were in; for our being thankful for what we have already, is ſurely an

excellent means of obtaining God's Bleſſing, and a continuance of ſo good Things to us.

Fourthly, We learn alſo, the method which the Apoſtle takes to encourage the *Coloſſians* to a perſeverance in the ſame *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith* and Uniformity of *Order*, *viz.* by praiſing and commending them for the Good which he had hitherto obſerved among them; This being a method eſpecially to be uſed when we would win and gain on others, where we have not any direct and immediate Power and Authority over them: As it is ſuppoſed St. *Paul* had not over theſe *Coloſſians*, they not having been Converted by him; and therefore he uſeth not that commanding way in this Epiſtle, as over the *Corinthians* and other Churches, which he himſelf had founded, and therefore challengeth the ſole charge and conduct of them.

But it ſhall ſuffice to have named theſe, that I may come more directly to the words of my Text.

They contain an account of the ſubject of the Apoſtle's rejoycing, and conſequently what ought to be our concern to Preſerve, Advance and Promote; and they are theſe Two,

I. *Order.*

II. *Stedfaſtneſs of Faith in Chriſt.*

By *Order* here, I ſuppoſe he underſtands the Regu-

Regularity and Uniformity of Manners and Diſcipline obſervable among them, the outward, peaceable and uniform frame of things in that Church, when there was no defiance or diſobedience of lawful Government; no Schiſm, Diviſion or Breach of Peace, no more than Vice and Wickedneſs publickly countenanced and practiſed among them; but all lived in ſome meaſure as became the Goſpel of Chriſt.

For all this is to be underſtood by *Order*, when it is joyned with *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, and with it makes up the happy ſtate and condition of a Church upon Earth.

And by *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, we muſt underſtand a continuing right and firm in our Belief of all the points of Chriſtian Doctrine, which the Apoſtles taught and which we have received in oppoſition to all wavering from it, either for Fear in times of Difficulty and Perſecution, or out of Wantonneſs and Vanity in times of Eaſe and Luxury; that no Heretical or Erroneous Opinions be countenanced or connived at, but a ſtrict care taken of keeping the Faith entire as it was at firſt, without either diminiſhing or adding to it. This muſt be underſtood by *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, as commendable in a Chriſtian Church.

The

The Apoſtle, indeed, here puts *Order* firſt, I ſuppoſe becauſe it is moſt viſible and liable to be taken notice of; and alſo, becauſe that on the due obſervance of it, *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith* in a great meaſure dependeth.

But I ſhall crave leave to treat of *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith* firſt, ſeeing that what concerns *Order* is eſpecially to be deſired for the greater Beauty and Ornament, the defence and ſecurity of the Faith.

I'll proceed in this method,

1. I'll treat of *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, and the neceſſity of it, and of our inſiſting on it.

2. Of *Order*, the neceſſity of its being injoyn'd and taken care of.

3. Make ſome Application ſuitable to the Text and the Occaſion.

1. I obſerve here that the Apoſtle rejoyceth at theſe Two things which he obſerved among the *Coloſſians*, as which did conſtitute the happy ſtate of a Church on Earth, *viz.* How *ſtedfaſt in the Faith*, and in what *Order* and Regularity they lived.

And hence we gather what ought to be the Object of our Care and Endeavour, as to keep the *Faith* pure and entire; ſo alſo, that *Order* and Government be preſerved in the Church.

And

And I will diſcourſe ſomewhat of both of theſe, becauſe Men's Complaints and Exceptions are frequent, as to both theſe particulars.

For ſo concerning the *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith* here commended, we hear ſome to complain, that we make too much adoe, inſiſt too ſtrictly on matter of bare Opinion and Belief; for ſo of late we have had ſome who have even ridiculed the great points of our Religion, concerning the *Trinity*, and the *Eternal Divinity of the Son of God*, and reckoned the deciſion of them to be *needleſs*; and not only ſo, but alſo *impoſſible* and *dangerous*.

2. And others find fault that we lay too great a ſtreſs on *Order* and Government, and the Regularity of Affairs in the Church.

But it is evident that both theſe kinds of Men have a wrong Notion of Religion, as well as of the Church. And I will indeavour to ſhow the reaſonableneſs of both theſe being inſiſted on for the ſettling the Church according to the true Apoſtolical Scheme and Frame. And then it will be obvious to ſee how proper matter of *rejoycing* it is to obſerve them eſpecially to flouriſh in this Church, of which we are Members.

I. I begin with *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, and the neceſſity

neceſſity of its being inſiſted on, and by all means preſerved and defended.

Now here though the Apoſtle might by *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, mean their conſtancy in profeſſing Chriſt in times of Danger and Perſecution; yet (thanks be to God) that not being our caſe, when our Religion is ſo far from being Perſecuted by the Civil Power, that it is Protected and Defended by it. I ſhall diſcourſe of it as we ought to be firm and *ſtedfaſt* in it againſt all Alteration and Innovation. That we ought to place a great deal of Religion in a true Faith and Belief, and not only in an outward, innocent and peaceable behaviour.

And this can be denyed by none that conſider,

1. How neceſſary a right Belief is made by our Saviour himſelf, by whom Salvation is promiſed only to them that Believe; And God ſurely may order how he will be ſerved, and on what terms he will give Salvation to us.

St. *Paul* alſo in his Epiſtles was as ſevere againſt bad Opinions, as againſt a bad Life. For if he Excommunicated the Inceſtuous Perſon, ſo did he alſo *Hymenæus* and *Alexander* for Errour in Faith, and commands *Timothy* to do ſo to all Hereticks.

Indeed

Indeed if out of Charity all Opinions are to be patiently born with, Chriſtianity may in a little time change its whole form, and be turned into another thing, as Mahometaniſm; for Mahometaniſm ſeems at firſt to have been looked on, only as an Hereſie from the Chriſtian Religion.

2. And, to confirm this, conſider, That however Innocent any Hereſie or falſe Opinion, concerning any Fundamental of our Religion, the Perſon of our Saviour, or the like, may appear at firſt, yet the Conſequences of it muſt needs, in a little time, make a conſiderable Change in the Face of the Church, and the State of Chriſtianity.

The *Arian* Controverſie, for Inſtance, appear'd at firſt ſo Nice and Needleſs a Diſpute to many Good Men, and even to *Conſtantine* himſelf, that *Alexander*, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, was blamed by many for ſo violently oppoſing it: And yet, if *Arianiſm* had prevail'd, it would ſo have alter'd the Face of the Church of Chriſt, that it would ſcarce have been to be known again.

And the like may be ſaid of *Socinianiſm*; what diſmal Conſequences have ſome already drawn from that Opinion concerning Chriſt (which would be improved farther, if it ſhould get firmer

mer Footing in the World) as, That Chriſt is not to be *Prayed* to, or *Worſhipped*, *&c.* For when any Falſe Opinion is but once Settled and Countenanced, there will be other kind of Conſequences gathered from it, than the Firſt Broachers of it would own, or perhaps did ſee. As we ſee what ſad Inferences the *Ranters* and *Antinomians* have raiſed from the Doctrine of *Free Grace.*

3. And in the Senſe of the Church of Chriſt, it hath never been reckon'd an indifferent Thing, how Men believed. For it was always required moſt indiſpenſably, That before any one came into the Church by *Baptiſm*, he ſhould make *Profeſſion* of his Faith, and *Promiſe* to keep the True Faith, as well as to lead a Vertuous Life. And when any Man was *Made a Biſhop* in the Church, his *Profeſſion of Faith* was to be ſent about to other Biſhops and Churches, that they might ſee what Faith he deſigned to propagate: And he that profeſſed not a Right Faith, was diſowned and depoſed. So that with them it did not ſeem ſo needleſs a Thing to contend for Matter of *Faith*, or of *meer Opinion*, as ſome are pleaſed to call it. And, I am ſure, we have Reaſon to Thank God that they were ſo Scrupulous, we ſhould not elſe have had our Religion conveyed

ed ſo pure and ſincere to us, as (bleſſed be God) now we have.

4. The Church is not to be blamed for *Declaring* the Articles of Apoſtolical Faith, though in ſuch *Declarations* ſhe uſeth Words that are not in Scripture (which is another great Exception, with ſome, againſt the Faith of the Church): For it is *neceſſary*, if we will explain Scripture, that we uſe Words that are not in Scripture to explain it by. And it is *juſt* alſo, that if Men will vend a bad Opinion in Words that are not in Scripture, the Church to explain her ſelf ſhould uſe againſt them Words that are not in Scripture, though agreeable to the Senſe of Scripture.

So *Euſebius* himſelf, who was favourable enough to the *Arians*, yet ſays, That the *Arians* were juſtly condemned by Words not written, as ὁμοούσιον, ſeeing that they themſelves had firſt uſed Words, not written, to confront the Church, and to deſtroy the Chriſtian Faith. For ſo they had uſed to ſay, ἦν ποτὲ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, and that Chriſt was made, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, &c. whereas it is evident, there are no ſuch Words to be found in Scripture. See *Euſebius*'s Epiſtle to his Church of *Cæſarea* in *Socrates*'s *Eccl. Hiſt.* l. 1. c. 8. and *Theodoret*, *Eccl. Hiſt.* l. 1. c. 12.

Laſtly, We are ſure, That even to direct our Belief aright, is what Chriſt himſelf in a great meaſure came to do; and what his Diſciples loſt their Lives in the Preaching and Spreading of.

And our believing and profeſſing aright is the Foundation of all, or the beſt part of that Worſhip and Homage, which we do or can pretend to pay to God.

If we pretend to *Magnifie and Praiſe* God for his Perfections in himſelf, we muſt firſt know and acknowledge him aright. For us to *thank* Chriſt for his Benefits, muſt ſuppoſe that we firſt think and believe aright concerning what he hath done for us. So that the true Worſhip of Chriſt muſt neceſſarily ſtand or fall, with our true or wrong Belief concerning him.

So *v. g.* in the *Socinian* Controverſie, unleſs I believe aright of Chriſt, how can I in my Mind acknowledge him, or with my Tongue thank him as I ought? I cannot aſcribe that to him that is his due, nor own my juſt Obligations to him.

And even true Chriſtian *Practice* alſo will fail with the decay of true *Belief*. For by undervaluing the Perſon of our Saviour, we ſhall certainly enervate the force of his Commands; we ſhall be more careleſs and remiſs as to the Duties enjoyned,

enjoyned, the meaner we think and believe of the Judge and Rewarder of our Actions.

So that I think it is evident, That Matter of Opinion and Belief, and particularly in the Points concerning the Perſon of our Bleſſed Saviour, is not an unneceſſary Thing; but that it ought moſt ſtrictly be taken care of, preſerved and guarded, and may moſt juſtly be rejoyced in, as the greateſt Bleſſing upon Earth, when it is found pure and entire, as (Bleſſed be God) it is among us; where every thing is profeſſed and inſiſted on, that can be ſhown to have been of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity.

II. I now come to conſider the Lawfulneſs and Need of having *Order* injoyned and obſerved in a Church.

By *Order* here, which joyned with *Stedfaſtneſs of Faith*, makes up the happy State of a Church upon Earth, I mean, that Form of Government and Way of Worſhip, that Unanimity and Agreement of the Members among themſelves, which is neceſſary to the Peace and Proſperity of a Church, as a Religious Chriſtian Society. And though ſome think that theſe Things ought not at all to be inſiſted on, that ſo long as the Faith is kept entire and uncorrupt,

rupt, it is no matter what is done, or not done here.

Yet ſuch Men conſider not,

1*ſt*. That it is neceſſary, that in a Church there be ſome Government or other, that ſome Orders and Rites be uſed, and only the ſame, at leaſt in the ſame Church; and this is neceſſary on ſeveral Accounts.

1. To anſwer the Notion of a Church, according to our Saviour's own deſigning of it, and the Apoſtle's eſtabliſhing of it.

Our Bleſſed Saviour ſpeaks of it as of a Body Incorporate, as of one Body and Society, as the Church and Nation of the *Jews* was. And ſo the Apoſtles did afterwards form it.

Now as the Church is a Body Corporate, it muſt have Rites, and Orders, and Rules to go by, which concern the outward Adminiſtration of Affairs.

It muſt have Governors. It muſt have a Power to make Laws, binding its Members, and to receive into or caſt out of the Society on occaſion. It muſt have Forms of Procedure in innumerable Caſes; and it can no longer ſubſiſt or act as a Society, than it hath Power to make theſe Orders, and can alſo oblige others to the Obedience of them. And elſe there could

could be no Obedience poſſibly due to Church-Governors, which is often commanded; nor could there be any ſuch a Sin as Schiſm in the World, which yet in Scripture is often ſpoken vehemently againſt.

2. There muſt alſo be ſome Government for the ſake of *the Faith*, to keep it *ſtedfaſt* and entire, to keep out and diſcountenance not only Hereſie, but alſo, Vice and Debauchery.

For, where there is no *Order* or *Government* in a Church eſtabliſh'd, there can be neither Rule nor Authority by which to Cenſure Falſe Doctrines, or Silence Falſe Teachers; or to require and exact a Profeſſion of One True Faith, of all that deſire to Communicate with her.

And, how various a Thing muſt Chriſtianity in a ſhort Time appear, if it were permitted every Perverſe, or Ignorant, or Fanciful Man, to make what he could of the Scripture; to Baptize and Adminiſter the Sacraments in what Form he pleaſed; and to vend every Doctrine as Orthodox, which he can writh and turn any Text of Scripture to ſeem to favour?

And not only Hereſie and bad Opinions, but Vice alſo and Debauchery muſt needs grow, where there is no Government; in a place ſo Uncultivated

Uncultivated as that muſt be. For I reckon Debauchery in Manners, to come eſpecially from a want of Power and due Diſcipline in the Church: And therefore they that firſt weaken its Diſcipline, and then complain of the Church, for Debaucheries not being ſuppreſs'd, are very Unjuſt. They firſt make us weak, then make the Effect of our Weakneſs an Argument againſt us.

3. At leaſt, in the ſame Church or Nation, it is fit that the *ſame Orders* be obſerved, if it were only for decency ſake; theſe Rites being the Clothes in which Religion muſt appear; and to prevent Confuſion, and to give no occaſion to People to ſay, *That we are mad*, as St. *Paul* ſays in a like Caſe.

I am ſure *Conſtantine* thought this a good Argument, to incline the *Eaſtern* Chriſtians to keep *Eaſter* as the *Weſtern* did (though the *Eaſtern* thought they had Apoſtolical Authority for what they did) from the unſeemlineſs of ſome, to Faſt when others Feaſted: As you ſee in his Epiſtle to the Churches, in *Socrates's Eccl. Hiſt. lib.* 1.

And true Unity never can be without Uniformity; nor can it be expected, that the Church ſhould thrive well, or laſt long, where

Order

Order is not preſerved; for I reckon, that Agreement in theſe externals and ſmall Things, as they call them, is like the fitneſs one to another of the ſmall Pegs and Joynts of a Building; not only the Beauty and Regularity, but the Strength of the Building depends very much upon it.

And as it is thus neceſſary, that there be ſome Government and Orders in a Church, and only the ſame in the ſame Church; ſo,

2*dly*, This Government and theſe Orders that we uſe in our Church, are every way recommended to us:

1. They are agreeable to the ancient Pattern; *v. g.* The Church of Chriſt hath been always thus governed, and no otherwiſe, than by Biſhops; and no one clear Inſtance to the contaary in all the World, till about One hundred and ſixty Years ſince. And we cannot deſire to go a better way than the Martyrs and Holy Biſhops of old, which converted the World, went: For it was under Epiſcopacy, by Forms of Liturgy, and the like Miniſtrations, that we and others were converted; and ſcarcely any were converted, but by ſuch as did own and acknowledge theſe.

And the very Unity of the Church alſo requires this of us, that we ſhould in theſe Caſes have regard to ancient Practice; we being as much bound to keep up Unity with the Chriſtians in the Primitive Times, though we live ſo many Years after them, as if we had lived at the ſame Time, but diſtant as to Place from them.

2. This Government, and theſe Orders, can alſo plead Preſcription among us and all the World, long enough to cancel the Obligation to any other kind of Orders, unleſs they were of abſolute and indiſpenſable Neceſſity: For if ever Presbyters had the Power of Ordaining, it cannot be ſhewn that ever they uſed it for about Fifteen hundred Years.

And, as to other Orders of our Church, they are ſuch as we have been long uſed to, are lawful in themſelves, and commanded by our lawful Governors; and as long as we own the Fifth Commandment, and the Commands of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, we are bound to obſerve them.

3. And, without Flattery to our ſelves, I think it may be ſaid, that our Conſtitution, by Epiſcopacy, Liturgy, Forms of Baptiſm, Confirmation, *&c.* the beſt that can be, anſwers the

the End and Deſign of all Eccleſiaſtical Rites and Orders, and is the beſt fitted to promote Devotion and a good Life, and to ſhame and puniſh Hereſie and falſe Opinions, as well as Lewdneſs and Debauchery; that is, they are the beſt Fence and Guard about our Religion, and the Faith and Manners of its Profeſſors that can be.

4. And laſtly, whatever Orders are ſet up in Oppoſition to theſe, are ſuch as they can ſhow no Warrant for, from Scripture or Antiquity; are new, and conſequently groundleſs; and are ſuch as generally were rather taken up by Force than Choice, as in the Extraordinary *Caſe of Maſter Calvin.*

Thus have I conſidered the Two firſt Parts of my Deſign, of the Neceſſity of *ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith*, and *of Order*, in a rightly Conſtituted Chriſtian Church.

The Application that I would make of all conſiſts of theſe Two Parts; of which as brief as may be.

Uſe 1. My firſt Uſe ſhall be from the firſt part of my Diſcourſe, that we learn to ſhow all becoming Zeal, againſt all Innovations in the Faith; againſt all Heretical and Erroneous Opinions whatſoever.

For however ſlight any may make of the denial of any Article of Faith; yet there will be worſe Conſequences raiſed from it, than they themſelves perhaps at firſt could have thought.

V. g. If *Socinianiſm* ſhould prevail, who knows but that his Followers will make *Fauſtus Socinus* as conſiderable, and Honour him as the *Mahometans* do *Mahomet*, or we our Bleſſed Saviour? For I am ſure, that if their Hypotheſis be true, he is as conſiderable as our Saviour himſelf is in their Eſteem, if they draw the Conſequences right.

For, according to them, our Saviour came only by his *Doctrine* to Teach the World, what by Nature they knew, or might have known and practiſed before, and by his *Example* to ſtir them up to an Imitation. But *Socinus* did as much or more for the World (ſay they.) He coming to deliver the World from the *Trinitarian Hereſie*, with which it was over-run, and to reſtore the Worſhip of the *One true God*, as they boaſt; than which, what can be greater either ſaid or done? And as his Sufferings in being perſecuted and baniſhed, will be made to bear ſome proportion to our Saviour's; ſo will thoſe Sufferings, in their eſteem, be fully as efficacious, and to as good purpoſe; *viz.* to con-

firm

firm his Followers in the Truth of what he ſaid, to atteſt his Doctrine, to give a good Example of Suffering in a Righteous Cauſe; for this is all that they aſcribe to the Sufferings of Chriſt, conſidered barely in themſelves and their own Worth, without reſpecting that Contract, which they ſuppoſe God to have made with him.

And as St. *Matthew*, to ſhew how conſiderable a Perſon our Saviour was, takes Notice of that wonderful Star that appeared at his Birth; of which we read in the Second Chapter of his *Goſpel*: So to make the Parallel to run even, *Wolzogenius*, in one of his Diſcourſes on that Chapter, takes Notice of four wonderful Stars that attended *Socinus*; and, as it were, proclamed him to the World; *viz. An.* 1572, 1596, 1600, and eſpecially that extraordinary one, *An.* 1604, about the time of his Death.

From all which and more of this Nature, that might be repreſented, it appears, that this Controverſie with them is not a *Puſh-pin Diſpute*, as a late Author calls it, but what concerns the very Eſſence of Chriſtianity.

Uſe 2. And let us be ſtrict alſo, not only in our Lives and Converſations, and in the Defence of ſuch a *Faith*, as we profeſs, but alſo in the Obſervance of ſo good *Orders* enjoyned to us.

And

And this we may very well reſolve, ſeeing there is nothing either abſurd or worſe required of us, in order to our being Regular (as the Church of *Rome* requires of her Clergy and People) but ſuch Things only as have a proper tendency to Decency and Edification.

And by being ſtrictly Regular, we ſhall encourage them that are ſo; ſhame them that are not; and keep a good Conſcience in our ſelves, and do the World alſo ſome Good. For we need not fear, but ſuch will be the Effect of good Example (by the Bleſſing of God) if we give it. For if bad Example is ſo prevalent, which is contrary both to Reaſon and Religion, what rare Effects will good Example have, if conſtantly given, which is ſo enforced by its being ſo agreeable to Reaſon, and commanded by Religion?

And to this purpoſe alſo, let us be ſtrict in keeping up Reſpect to our Governors; for the Government muſt needs ſuffer in the Perſon of the Governor. Neither hear nor incourage any Complaints againſt them, or the Government; for it is always very eaſie to find fault, but difficult, if not impoſſible, even to contrive or ſuppoſe a Scheme, in which no fault is to be found; and more difficult to find Men to ma-

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nage it, whom Malice or Envy will have nothing to ſay againſt.

Let us alſo be exceeding careful to prevent any Miſunderſtanding, Diſſenſion, or Animoſity among our ſelves. The ſtrength of a Society, and the Advantage of Living in it, is the Union of its Members, and their being knit cloſer in Love one to another; and where any kind of Animoſities and Strifes are, the whole Body is weakned; and one Deſign of our Saviour, in conſtituting his Church a Society, is in ſome meaſure fruſtrated.

And to this purpoſe, let us not be forward even to *Cenſure* one another, much leſs openly to oppoſe one another, and break into Parties.

He that but Cenſures another that lives Regularly in the Society, though even on pretence of greater Strictneſs and Regularity, generally follows his Paſſion more than his Conſcience. Let him be as ſtrict and ſcrupulous in his own Behaviour as he will, but let him not, though on pretence of greater Purity, Cenſure other Men, ſo long as they keep to the Rules of the Church, and do what is appointed. Perhaps, what you take for the Occaſion of your Cenſure, is a miſtake, and groundleſs; and there are many falſe Repreſentations of Things in the World:

World: At leaſt *to his own Maſter, he muſt ſtand or fall.* To be ſure, by cenſuring and ſpeaking ill of him, you will do the Church more hurt than good; and that ought to outweigh many other Conſiderations, with every good Man.

The Rule therefore that I think we ought to mind, as to the Caſe before us, is this: Every little thing ought to be done by my ſelf moſt ſtrictly, that I think is at all required of me; but they are only the great Points for which I am allowed to Cenſure other Men. A Canon commends ſome Things, which are alſo practiſed by moſt perhaps; but yet expreſly forbids us to judge one another, for doing or not doing of them: And the like might well be applied to many other Caſes.

But, for Chriſt's ſake, have a care of dividing or openly oppoſing one another: For the Peace of the Church is of ſo great value, that ſuch Oppoſition and Separation can never be juſtified, but when it is for the ſake of the Fundamentals of our Religion.

Dionyſius, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, in his Excellent Epiſtle to *Novatus*, in *Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 6. c.* 45. ſays to this purpoſe, That it is more honourable and becoming Religion *for a Man to die to prevent or make up a Schiſm in the Church, than*

than to ſuffer Martyrdom for the Faith: And if ſo, then it is, at leaſt, as bad to be the cauſe of a Schiſm, as to deny the Faith.

And though good and ancient Orders are to be obſerv'd, and we have a hearty Zeal for them: Yet all Things that we may think uſeful to the Church, and could wiſh to have practiſed, we muſt not diſturb the World to have them introduced. Our Church teacheth us this Rule, when ſhe ſpeaks of Publick Penance; which ſhe calls, *ancient*, *uſeful*, and *to be wiſhed for*, but doth by no means Authorize any to riſe up in Tumult, to endeavour the introducing of it; and the like may be ſaid of other Caſes.

Publick Good is to be preferred and prayed for before Private, and conſequently the advancing the Reputation and Intereſt of the Church, before the gratifying our (though juſt) Reſentments. At leaſt, it is better to endure a little inconvenience in Things ſettled, than to endeavour the amendment of it by their overthrow. We are a conſiderable Body if we hold together, and are not eaſily hurt; but if we divide into Parties, we ſhall be devoured one of another.

Let us then be even jealous of the good Name and Reputation of one another, and eſpecially

of our Governors, and of them that are in Authority among us: For, whatever we pretend, the Church will certainly be hurt in them.

And as to be the occaſion of dividing the Church, though on very juſt Pretences, as we may think, will grieve a tender Conſcienc'd Man as long as he lives: So to have any hand, though the leaſt part, in ſo good a Work, as the *Uniting*, *Settling* and *Defending* of the Church againſt any of its Enemies, or to be inſtrumental to the perſwading and bringing over others to it, is the trueſt Subject of rejoycing that can be to a good Mind; and is in it ſelf ſo conſiderable a Thing, that it is even worth the while for a Man to come into the World on purpoſe about.

It is indeed the Duty of every the meaneſt Member of the Church, to take what care he can, that both the *Faith* and *Order* be preſerved: But it is more eſpecially the Duty of the Biſhops, the Fathers and Governors of the Church, to be very diligent in looking after both. For Biſhops have the *Maintenance of the Faith* committed to them: This was the *Depoſitum* ſpoken of by St. *Paul*, as committed to *Timothy*, Biſhop of *Epheſus*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 20. Biſhops being the Guardians of our Faith. Hence in all Eccleſiaſtical

ſtical Hiſtory, you'll read, as if the People received their Faith from their Biſhop; and his Faith and Belief being known to be true, his Dioceſs was always ſuppoſed to be Right and Orthodox. Such Union were the People always ſuppoſed to have with their Biſhop in thoſe Days, and ſuch Influence had he on them.

Biſhops alſo are the principal Perſons concerned in the encouraging and vindicating *the Orders* of the Church; for they either appoint them, or at leaſt approve of them, and are to ſee them executed.

And as we have cauſe to Thank God for ſo many Learned and Worthy Men promoted to the Degree of Biſhops in our Church, who, we hope, will be Stout Defenders of our Faith, and Eſtabliſhers of Order among us: So let us pray God, that all that ſhall be Adopted into this Society, may ſignalize themſelves by their Zeal for the Truth of Religion, and for outward Order and Government, in oppoſition to all that would either undermine our Faith, or diſturb our Peace. And particularly let us pray God, to ſend that Excellent Perſon, now to be received into that Order, a double Portion

tion of his Spirit, large as his Mind, and ſuitable to his Charge; that he may be as Eminent and as Uſeful in this, as he hath been in his former Station, and may long continue a Light to our *Iſrael*. *Amen.*

FINIS.

ERRATUM.

Page 21. line 12. for *run ever*, read *run even.*